

Talk

Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

SUMMER 2019 ISSUE 8

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 8 of the Talk Housing newsletter. We have packed the newsletter with information for our tenants and leaseholders and hope that you find it enjoyable to read. We would love to have your feedback and ideas for future editions.

Please email
community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



The Great Get Together

Inside

3. Investing in your home 4. Life on the Barnsfield Estate 6. A review of the year

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www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing



Five minutes with Jamie

Jamie Carswell, Director for Housing and Safer Communities tells Talk Housing about the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

So, what is the Housing & Homelessness Strategy?

This will be our five-year plan to address the housing issues in Royal Greenwich, and to explore radical new approaches to meeting housing need, so that residents have genuinely affordable and safe homes.

How do you decide what is a priority?

We look at who is registering for housing and what they need, this means identifying if we need more wheelchair adapted properties, homes with enough bedrooms for larger families or supported housing for people with a learning disability. We also talk to other providers of housing, residents and councillors and ask them what they think is important.

What does having a safe home mean?

We've done lots of work about fire safety in Council homes, but we have a responsibility to private tenants too. We already advise private sector landlords, but are exploring schemes that give us the powers to tackle rogue landlords if they don't meet safety standards or their homes are in poor condition. In the worst cases this can mean banning them from letting property.

What about the rough sleepers we see on the streets?

We want to try new ways to deal with rough sleeping and work with specialist agencies to prevent rough sleeping in south-east London by bidding for more funding from central government.

When will you deliver this?

We are consulting on the strategy over the summer and will have a detailed plan in late autumn that sets out what we will do and when.

Hot topics this summer

1 We have partnered with Battersea to offer FREE pet training for our council tenants and leaseholders.

Register your interest here: www.battersea.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/community-engagement.

Don't forget, if you live in council accommodation you need permission from your tenancy enforcement officer before you get a pet.

There are a number of activities taking place in the borough this summer, for all ages! Find the full line up for Royal Greenwich Festivals 2019 online, royalgreenwich.gov.uk/festivals. **2**

3 If you're a member of the LGBTQ+ community, we would like to hear your views as part of an ongoing programme, to ensure all our residents feel supported by housing services. For more info please email community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



FREE summer meals will be available for school aged children during the summer holidays. Visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/holidaymeals for details. **4**

5 Come along to a YourVIEW event and get entered into a PRIZE DRAW! More information on the back page!



The Royal Greenwich Get Together

The Royal Greenwich Get Together and Armed Forces Day took place on Saturday 29 June. It was an action packed, fun day of activities, for all the family to enjoy - page 5 for more info! You can also check our website to see more pics.

Investing in your home 2018/19


We have invested over £19 million in improvement works to council homes in the borough.

Some highlights include:


157 homes

have benefited from security upgrades to John Wilson Street and Charles Grinling Walk!


475
security windows


615
energy efficient boilers

331
new
kitchens and
523
new
bathrooms



Major damp protection work to
1,113 homes



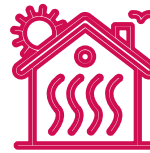
511
new homes
made ready for new tenants

What next?

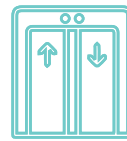
We are now working on:



- Replacing our ageing electrical wiring connecting flats in blocks to the main electrical supply. Around 200 blocks will benefit over the next 5 years.



- Replacing some of our older communal heating schemes to improve reliability and efficiency.



- Launching our lift replacement programme.

Here's some work we did in John Wilson Street to upgrade the security of the building.

Before



After



You can email capital-investment-admin@royalgreenwich.gov.uk for more information.



Susan's Barnfield

We spoke to Susan about what she loves about living on the Barnfield Estate.

“**My best memory of the estate was** when we had refurbishments and when the Council stepped up security. I was also happy when the estate landscape was updated; we now have nice views that are appealing to the eye. The caretakers clean the estate well. People say

“oh you live in Barnfield?
It's nice there!”

My favourite location is the Barnfield Hub, which is our local community space, we often have coffee mornings, exercise and cookery classes there. It's really good

for preventing social isolation and loneliness, we spend a lot of time there as a community. **When there has been anti-social behaviour,** my Tenancy Enforcement Officer always sorts it out straight away; the Tenancy Enforcement Officer is friendly and approachable. **The most support I have received** while living on the estate was the Council arranging for me to have a shower facility in my room, which has been adapted for my needs, I don't need to worry about falling anymore. **In future, I would like to see** more of an upkeep of the plants on the estate. **Greenwich needs to** continue educating residents on preventing anti-social behaviour.”

Behind the scenes... All about Susan

- I have lived on the estate for 30 years.
- I know all of my local Councillors. To find out about your Councillor, visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/councillor.
- I enjoy travelling and going on holidays.





Up to 20,000 people attended Royal Greenwich Get Together and Armed Forces Day



Caught in the act!



As a result of rubbish continually being dumped on Sewell Road in Abbey Wood, we set up a mobile camera and have caught a resident who illegally dumped their mattress. We were able to trace the resident's address and took the opportunity to seize their vehicle for fly-tipping the mattress. The resident paid a £640 fine to have their vehicle returned, when it would have cost just £10.30 to dispose of it with the Council. Some council tenants may have this fee already covered by service charge, more info at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/bulkywaste.

A year in review

How we did in numbers.

We have dealt with **942 complaints**

Target 100%
100% of Fire Risk
high rise blocks
have been
completed

FIRE

Target 90%
94% of
urgent repairs
were completed
by the target time

Target 50 days
The average
time to re-let a
council property
is **75 days**

Target 98%
99% of rent
was collected

Target 95%
and 90%
We have kept **93%**
of our appointments
for responsive repairs and
have **completed 88%**
of non urgent
repairs on time

Target 90%
95% of caretaking
inspections
have met the
required standard

Target 100%
99.5% of Gas
Safety Inspections
have been carried
out on time

Target 70
properties
47 properties
have been recovered
due to subletting and
absent tenants

Repairs is a key service to tenants and we are working on ongoing improvements.

We are aiming to reduce the re-let time for council homes in the coming year.

Caretaking supervisors continue to inspect standards on our estate. If you are interested in checking standards, please sign up to YourVIEW to take part in our borough wide spot checks.

Maintaining a high level of rent collection means that we have more money to spend on your services.

Your safety comes first, which is why we work hard to access properties to carry out gas inspections.

We have a dedicated team who follow up reports of subletting to take back much needed council homes.

We have a formal complaints system if you feel we have fallen below standard. All complaints are thoroughly investigated and completed within a set time.

? **The big question:** How do I downsize?

? If you approach the Council asking to move, and you meet the criteria, we will contact you before making an offer of accommodation. You won't be forced to accept a property you are not interested in. We will assist you with the move and give an incentive if you are giving up two or more rooms. This is £350 for each bedroom.

Contact the team as soon as you see a property you like. We can't guarantee an offer but it does help us to understand what you are looking for and where you want to live. One resident stated that the whole process for her was 'brilliant' and that she would 'definitely recommend *downsizing*' to others.

Please email housing-registration@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or contact **020 8921 2941** for further information.

Fire Safety



We have met our *target* by completing 100% of Fire Risk assessments on high rise blocks have been completed. **If you know anyone that would answer yes to two or more of the following they would benefit from a London Fire Brigade home visit.**

- Smokes in the home
- Over the age of 60
- Lives alone
- Has limited mobility
- Would have difficulty in responding to or escaping from a fire
- Has had a previous fire or there are signs of scorching around the home
- Has learning difficulties
- Needs a carer
- Has a mental health condition or dementia
- Has drug or alcohol dependencies/
- Does not have a smoke alarm
- Collects or hoards in the home

London Fire Brigade home visit

Book a free home safety visit with the London Fire Brigade to keep your home safe from fire.

They can help you prevent accidents, give advice on high risk rooms and activities and keep you safe from fire in your home.

Call **0800 028 4428** to arrange a visit or email: smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk or text on **07860 021319**.

Recycle in the sun

Tips to help you be more green when having fun in the sun.

- Rinse out bottles and sprays of sunscreen lotions before putting them in blue bins.
- Store leftovers and food in reusable containers.
- Reduce plastic waste by having a refillable bottle.
- Use paper or compostable bags for any extra garden waste you may have.

Please visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/recycling for more information.



We held our first prize draw for YourVIEW in June. Here's a photo of the lucky winner with their shopping voucher. You could be next!

PRIZE DRAW

- You must be a member of YourVIEW in order to enter.
- You must complete an attendance sheet at an event, or respond to any email from the Online Reading Group sent during the stated time period to be entered into the draw. Members can opt out of entering into the draw by emailing YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.



The YourVIEW campaign recruits tenants and leaseholders who are keen to give their views and work with the Council to help shape and improve Royal Greenwich Housing Services.

YOUR VIEW

For further information www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/YourVIEW
Watch the video on our website.

Wordsearch

Have a go at completing our wordsearch, and you could be in with a chance of winning a voucher from a local supermarket!

There are 10 words in the wordsearch which are all *highlighted* in this newsletter. You can either:

Email the 10 words to YourVIEW email YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Or

Tear out the back page with your full name, contact number or email and return it to the Participation Team at the Woolwich Centre.

